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Microsoft Press
Computer
User's
Dictionary

Microsoft Press

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Dictionary of Computer Terms

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application-centric

application-centric adj. Of, pertaining to, or characteristic of an operating system in which a user invokes an application to open or create documents (such as word processing files or spreadsheets). Command-line interfaces and some graphical user interfaces such as the Windows 3.x Program Manager are application-centric. *Compare* document-centric.

application development language n. A computer language designed for creating applications. The term usually refers to languages with specific high-level constructs geared toward record design, form layout, database retrieval and update, and similar tasks. *See also* application.

application file n. *See* program file.

application gateway n. Software running on a machine that is intended to maintain security on a secluded network yet allow certain traffic to go between the private network and the outside world. *See also* firewall.

application layer n. The highest of the seven layers in the ISO/OSI model for standardizing computer-to-computer communications. The application layer handles communication at the application-program level, such as file transfer or remote access to a computer. *See also* ISO/OSI model.

application processor n. A processor dedicated to a single application.

application programming interface or application program interface

n. A set of routines used by an application program to direct the performance of procedures by the computer's operating system. *Acronym:* API. **application shortcut key n.** A key or combination of keys that when pressed will quickly perform an action within an application that would normally require several user actions, such as menu selections. *Also called* keyboard shortcut.

application software n. *See* application.

application suite n. *See* suite.

arbitration n. A set of rules for resolving competing demands for a machine resource by multiple users or processes. *See also* contention.

.arc n. The file extension that identifies compressed archive files encoded using the Advanced RISC Computing Specification (ARC) format. *See also* compressed file.

arcade game n. 1. A coin-operated computer game for one or more players that features high-quality screen graphics, sound, and rapid action. 2. Any computer game designed to mimic the style of a coin-operated arcade game, such as games marketed for the home computer. *See also* computer game. **Archie n.** An Internet utility for finding files in public archives obtainable by anonymous FTP. The master Archie server at McGill University in Montreal downloads FTP indexes from participating FTP servers, merges them into a master list, and sends updated copies of the master list to other Archie servers each day. Archie is a shortened form of the word archive. *See also* anonymous FTP, FTPⁱ (definition 1). *Compare* Jughead, Veronica.

ARPANET

Archie server n. On the Internet, a server that contains Archie indexes to the names and addresses of files in public FTP archives. *See also* Archie, FTPⁱ (definition 1), server (definition 2).

architecture n. 1. The physical construction or design of a computer system and its components. *See also* cache, CISC, closed architecture, network architecture, open architecture, RISC. 2. The data-handling capacity of a microprocessor. 3. The design of application software incorporating protocols and the means for expansion and interfacing with other programs.

archive¹ n. 1. A tape or disk containing files copied from another storage device and used as backup storage. 2. A compressed file. 3. A file directory on the Internet that is available by FTP, or an Internet directory established for dissemination of stored files.

archive² vb. 1. To copy files onto a tape or disk for long-term storage. 2. To compress a file.

archive bit n. A bit that is associated with a file and is used to indicate whether the file has been backed up. *See also* back up, bit.

archive file n. A file that contains a set of files, such as a program with its documentation and example input files, or collected postings from a newsgroup. Depending on the utility being used, archive files can be compressed as they are created or they can be compressed later. *See also* compress, Stuffit, tarⁱ.

archive site n. A site on the Internet that stores files. The files are usually accessed in one of the following ways: downloaded through anonymous FTP, retrieved through Gopher, or viewed on the World Wide Web. *See also* anonymous FTP, Gopher.

area search n. In information management, the examination of a group of documents for the purpose of identifying those that are relevant to a particular subject or category.

arithmetic operator n. An operator that performs an arithmetic operation: +, -, ×, or / (for addition, subtraction, multiplication, or division). *See also* logical operator, operator (definition 1).

ARP n. Acronym for Address Resolution Protocol. A TCP/IP protocol for determining the hardware address of a node on a local area network connected to the Internet, when only the IP address is known. An ARP request is sent to the network, and the node that has the IP address responds with its hardware address. Although ARP technically refers only to finding the hardware address, and RARP (for Reverse ARP) refers to the reverse procedure, ARP is commonly used for both senses. *See also* IP address, TCP/IP. **ARPANET n.** A large wide area network created in the 1960s by the U.S. Department of Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (ARPA) for the free exchange of information between universities and research organizations, although the military also used this network for communications. In the 1980s MILNET, a separate network, was spun off from ARPANET for use